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THE OLD AND THE NEW CENTURY.

An Address

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ON ITS

NINETY-SIXTH ANNIVERSARY,

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1900.

BY

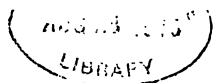
THE REV. MARVIN R. VINCENT, D.D.



NEW YORK:
PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY.

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AT a meeting of the NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY, held in its Hall, on Tuesday evening, November 20, 1900, to celebrate the Ninety-sixth Anniversary of the Founding of the Society :

The Anniversary Address was delivered by the Reverend MARVIN R. VINCENT, D.D., on "The Old and the New Century."

On its conclusion, Mr. A. V. W. Van Vechten, with remarks, submitted the following resolution which was adopted unanimously :

Resolved, That the thanks of the Society be presented to the Reverend MARVIN R. VINCENT, D.D., for the learned, eloquent, and instructive address delivered before the Society this evening, and that a copy be requested for publication.

Extract from the minutes.

SYDNEY H. CARNEY, JR.,
Recording Secretary.

THE OLD AND THE NEW CENTURY

I MUST claim your indulgent sympathy this evening. In these days there is a general protest against too little liberty: my embarrassment comes of having too much. I am like the old Roman, standing at the golden milestone in the Forum, with the roads striking out in all directions, for Brundisium, Ancona, Cisalpine Gaul, Macedonia, and Byzantium, and doubtful which to take. The officers of your society, in their invitation to me, have prescribed no theme and have imposed no limitations. I am simply turned loose upon the outbranching highways of a century of history — a century more pregnant with great movements, great achievements, and great ideas than any that has preceded it, and the world is all before me where to choose. There lie ready to my hand the history of this Society, the history of our City, the history of our State, the history of the United States, and the history of the world; and what complicates the matter is, that a speaker can hardly deal with any one of these without stepping upon the lines of the others. I am reminded of Charles Lamb's remark on the occasion of his emancipation from the India House: "It was like

passing out of time into eternity; for it is a sort of eternity for a man to have his time all to himself."

Let me take up the first thing which lies directly in my path; the pleasant duty of congratulating the officers and members of this venerable and justly honoured society on the completion of nearly a century of life and fruitful work. It would be superfluous to dilate upon your services to this city and to the nation at large. It may or may not be much for a man or an institution to have lived for ninety-six years. Age, in itself, is not necessarily respectable. It does not follow that the significance of years imparts itself to those who have lived in them. It is quite possible that they may have let the years run past them like a panorama, or over them, like a running stream over stones, with no result but to wear away the stones. But ninety-six years, to an institution which has been an integral part of its age, which has addressed itself to the solution of its problems, knit itself into its relationships, and helped to direct its currents of thought and to work out its ideas—have woven for that institution a crown of honour. The long list of the notable names which figure in your catalogue is a warrant that you have not been idle nor insignificant nor useless. You have been distinctly a force in the culture of this city. You number among your names those of men who were active in the achievement of our national independence and in the framing of our constitution; and had

you accomplished nothing else, you would be entitled to lasting remembrance for a century of protest and effort against that state of things so tersely characterised by Thucydides, where he says: "So little trouble do men take in the search after truth: so readily do they accept what first comes to hand."

Your own archives, so laboriously amassed and so carefully classified, offer to a speaker a most seductive temptation to indulge in gossipy details and contrasts, with only a small part of which it would be easy to consume the whole evening. This temptation I shall resist; but it will none the less be helpful if we orient ourselves by noting a few salient facts.

It is Friday evening, November 20, 1804. Eleven gentlemen assemble in the picture-room of the City Hall in Wall Street, and agree to form themselves into a society, the principal design of which shall be to collect and preserve whatever may relate to the natural, civil, or ecclesiastical history of the United States in general, and of this State in particular. At an adjourned meeting on Monday evening, December 10th, the constitution of the New York Historical Society is reported and adopted. On January 14, 1805, the first meeting is held, and the society is fully organised. Thomas Jefferson is President of the United States George III. is on the British throne. It is twenty-eight years since the Declaration of Independence

was signed, and five years since the death of George Washington. Seventeen States constitute the United States of America, the population of which is between four and five millions.

The city of New York has a population of between sixty and seventy thousand. The majority of the residents live below Cortlandt Street and Maiden Lane, and the outside line is a little above Worth Street. It wants yet eight years to the completion of the present City Hall, the rear of which is constructed of brown freestone, under the impression that it is to be exposed to the gaze of suburbans only. Washington Square is the Potter's Field, and Columbia College is on the original site of King's College, between what are now Church, Murray, and Barclay Streets and College Place; or, as Dr. Francis puts it, "Proud of her healthy and beautiful locality, laved, almost up to the borders of her foundation, by the flowing stream of the Hudson." Old Trinity is represented by her second church edifice, erected in 1778, with its modest spire, its long gothic windows, and its little domed portico over the main entrance. It wants yet twenty-one years to the completion of the Erie Canal. There are no public facilities for getting out of town and travelling through the country. The adventurous voyager must take his life in his hand with his carpet-bag, and intrust himself to stage-coaches, saddle-horses, and sloops. Of this latter mode of trans-

portation one may get a fair idea from the lively story of "Dolf Heydegger" by Washington Irving, who, in 1801, was a youth of seventeen, at 128 William Street. It will be three years before Fulton's Clermont will make her first passage up the Hudson, causing the countryman on the Palisades to tell his wife that he had seen the Devil on his way to Albany in a sawmill. Forty years are yet to pass before Morse will give the world the electric telegraph; seven years before Colonel John Stevens will start the first steam ferry to Hoboken; twenty-one years before Stephenson's first trial with a locomotive, and twenty-four years before the first steam railway in America. Napoleon is fast climbing to the pinnacle of his greatness, and already the elements are fermenting which are to evolve the war of 1812.

The contrast with to-day—there is no time and no need for me to elaborate it. The seventeen States have become forty-five; the five millions have swelled to over seventy-six millions, and the sixty-five thousand of this city to three and a half millions. We have more than eight hundred thousand miles of telegraph; we go from New York to San Francisco in four days. To quote another's words: "With the railroads which have been built, we could parallel every track in all Europe, and then have enough over, if we could use the equator for a road-bed, to girdle the earth." The progress in invention, education, manufactures,

luxury, art, literature, you must trace for yourselves.

We stand on the borders of the new century with a marvellous equipment. May it not be fairly assumed that we have, to a great extent, outgrown that earlier and crude stage in which we were given to boasting of bigness and smartness, to regarding older nations with pity or contempt, and our democracy as a completed and successful experiment? It seems to me that the conviction has more than dawned that our work is only begun, and that, while the future may enfold higher development and larger achievement, it also enfolds problems, some of which have already given significant hints of themselves, and which, in their magnitude, their reach, and the number of new factors they involve, will tax to the utmost the wisdom of those in whose hands their solution shall lie. It seems to me that, at the gate of the new century, we can hardly fail to realise that we ourselves, in our own rapid and enormous growth, have created new necessities which we must meet, new questions which we must answer, and new and colossal difficulties with which we must grapple. It is the best of all auguries for the future if we have put away our youthful vanity, and have grown humbler.

The Old and the New Century.—Is it possible to characterise each briefly and comprehensively? It is not so easy as is often supposed, to throw

history into clearly defined periods and to draw sharply the lines of cleavage between them. The Oxford historian, the late Edward Freeman, was wont to protest vigorously against the popular division of history into ancient and modern, and to declare that he had never been able to find out the difference between the two, nor where ancient history ends and modern history begins ; and Thomas Arnold was right when he claimed that what is called ancient history is the most truly modern, the most truly living, and the most rich in practical lessons for every succeeding age.

We may indeed throw history roughly into divisions, in each of which some particular idea or aggregation of ideas takes definite shape, and is worked out wholly or in part, and we may denote the century by the idea ; but the fact remains that the ideas of successive periods overlap in their development, and that those ideas which burst into flower in one period, and which we seize upon as characteristic, have been fermenting and germinating in preceding periods, and put forth new branches and yield new fruit in those which succeed. It may be correct to say, in a general and superficial way, that the protest against religious hierarchy and the rise of religious liberty are characteristic of the sixteenth century, or that the eighteenth century is the century of social and philosophic liberty and illuminism : but the protest against Hildebrandism began long before the six-

teenth century, and the spirit of Rousseau, Voltaire, and Diderot was astir in Abelard.

Guarding ourselves at this point, it may sufficiently serve our present purpose to describe the old century as a century of *demolition* and *acquisition*, and to say that, with the new century, we are entering more definitely upon a period of *construction*.

As to demolition, we had, in the beginning, foreign tyranny to break down; we have had slavery to abolish; we have had to destroy or surmount the physical obstacles to free intercourse; we have had to overcome the secrecy and obstinacy of the rocks, and to make them give up their gold and silver; we have had to overcome ignorance and the conceited reluctance of a young nation to learn from older and riper civilisations; we have had to assail, we have not yet demolished, the barrier of race-prejudice.

As to acquisition, we have acquired vast wealth, and at a phenomenal rate. In the thirty years from 1860 to 1890, notwithstanding the enormous drain created by the civil war, we created and accumulated forty-nine thousand millions of dollars, a thousand millions more than the entire wealth of Great Britain, and the increase has been at a larger rate since 1890. From a borrowing nation we have become a lending nation. In 1898-99 our exports exceeded our imports by five hundred and thirty millions of dollars, and our

manufactured products have more than doubled in the last six years. We have travelled extensively, and have brought back from the old world far more than an acquaintance with picture galleries and cathedrals. Our eyes have been opened to the fact that older civilisations have much to teach us in the art and economy of living, and that they had made great and serious experiments in government, had profoundly studied political philosophy, had elaborated educational systems, had developed the science of war and achieved lasting triumphs in art and literature, before Columbus attempted the Atlantic with his caravels. We have acquired the arts of luxury, and a large share of education and literary culture. We go into the new century with political independence, with religious liberty, with a vast system of popular education, with an imposing array of churches, schools, and charitable institutions; with a recognised supremacy in agriculture and in certain branches of manufacture; with a prodigious development of inventive talent; with an imposing array of facilities for travel; with a vast commercial system, and with a growing and highly scientific apparatus for war. We have silenced the sneering question, "Who reads an American book?" In medical science, in chemistry and physics, in theology and Biblical criticism, the works of our specialists challenge the attention of European scholars. We have occupied and culti-

vated a vast area of new territory, and have developed immense mining and agricultural resources, and have acquired important dependencies in the Pacific and in the Caribbean Sea.

I repeat, we have been principally occupied during the past century in amassing these things, and in breaking down the obstacles to acquisition. We have proved our ability to deal with the obstacles and to reap the fruits of energy, enterprise, and inventive skill. But the significant question which confronts us at the gate of the new century is, "What next?" What are we going to do with it all? What are we going to make out of it? How are we going to make it all tributary to the evolution of the ideal commonwealth—the consummate embodiment of the principle of constitutional liberty? It is surely neither invidious, pessimistic, nor un-American to assume that this consummation is yet in the future. You recall, perhaps, the words of Mr. Bryce: "I have seen the latest experiment which mankind have tried, and the last which they can ever hope to try under equally favouring conditions. A race of unequalled energy and unsurpassed variety of gifts, a race apt for conquest and for the arts of peace, which has covered the world with the triumphs of its sword, and planted its laws in a hundred islands of the sea, sent the choicest of its children to a new land rich with the bounties of nature, bidding them increase and multiply, with no enemies to fear from

Europe, and few of those evils to eradicate which Europe inherits from its feudal past. They have multiplied until the sapling of two centuries ago overtops the parent trunk ; they have drawn from their continent a wealth which no one dreamed of ; they have kept themselves aloof from old-world strife, and have no foe in the world to fear ; they have destroyed, after a tremendous struggle, the one root of evil which the mother-country, in an unhappy hour, planted among them ; and yet the government and institutions, as well as the industrial civilisation of America, are far removed from that ideal commonwealth which European philosophers imagined, and Americans expected to create." These are the words of an Englishman, of a cool, keen, and judicial observer, and of a hearty friend and admirer. We must, of course, discount the somewhat rose-coloured description of the paternal and benignant attitude of England in sending her children forth to these shores, and bidding them increase and multiply, with no enemies to fear from Europe. This last statement is adapted to provoke a smile, when it is remembered that England herself was our chief European enemy, that we had two wars with her, and that she stabbed us in the back in our great civil conflict. But setting this aside, are not the words fair, truthful, and discerning ? We have done much, but doing and making are not synonymous terms. We started upon the experiment of de-

mocracy under singularly favourable conditions, and yet, as has been truthfully said, "the plan of throwing the whole responsibility of government upon the people themselves was a sublime venture of faith on the part of our forefathers." There were things which they could not foresee, which we have seen and are seeing; and even as the towering, many-tinted iceberg which lifts its huge bulk high above the waves, tells the practised eye that there is still more of it beneath than above the ocean-floor, so the thoughtful observer of our national life and history detects in what is already apparent, imposing and brilliant though it be, hints of larger problems and more vital issues which have not yet emerged. Is our experiment a success? Have we successfully vindicated democracy as the ideal polity for the future and for the world? We were not the first to try the democratic experiment. The success of those who tried it before us was not encouraging. There is no historical record of any other democracy which lasted for a hundred years. I am not a pessimist. I am not boding failure or disaster. I am merely suggesting a question which wiser men than I have asked before. I am asking only that we stop and think. There are political theorists, as you all know, who maintain that democracy is the child of ignorance, and must inevitably mean the rule of the worst. Have we furnished anything going to confirm that conclusion? Are we able to say to-day, in the

light of more than a century of history, that American democracy proves that democracy means the rule of the best and the most intelligent?

This is an immense question, impossible to treat satisfactorily within my limits. The most that can be done is to select some salient points of our political, intellectual, social, and moral development, and see what hints they furnish which may provoke thought, or hope, or apprehension, or caution.

It should be repeated and emphasised, that the answer to such a question must take into account many more factors than those which entered into De Tocqueville's discussion, some few more perhaps than entered into the more recent and very remarkable work of Mr. Bryce. It did not prove an altogether simple and easy matter to organise and compact an infant people of three or four millions into a working democracy: what then shall be said of a people of over seventy-six millions, distributed over an area of three and one-half millions of square miles, lying in different climatic belts, including an enormous foreign element, educated under different political and social conditions from our own, freely admitted to a share in government, and with a voice in the shaping of our institutions; in a country representing different material interests in its different sections, and open to the possibility of sectional prejudice and of sectional rivalry? Is the old machinery adequate to the new and heavier strain? Can the

elements over the whole area be made homogeneous, or at least adjusted in a substantial unity? How strong a pervasive power resides in the democratic leaven? How strong a solvent is it to disintegrate or modify foreign elements? This is the vast constructive problem which is looming up in the reddening dawn of the new century—how individual liberty, allowed its full legitimate scope, is to be run into the mould of a commonwealth in which the liberty of the individual and the interest of the body politic shall be in perfect equipoise; in which, as De Tocqueville puts it, “All men would feel an equal love and respect for the laws of which they consider themselves as the authors; in which the authority of the government would be respected as necessary, though not as divine; and in which the loyalty of the subject to the chief magistrate would not be a passion, but a quiet and rational persuasion; in which, every individual being in possession of rights which he is sure to retain, a kind of manly courtesy would arise between all classes, alike removed from pride and servility; in which the people, well acquainted with their own true interests, would understand that, in order to profit by the advantages of society, it is necessary to satisfy its requisitions.” I may add to this, in which religion shall have a voice along with political authority, yet neither religion nor political authority trench upon the other’s province; in which there shall be ren-

dered unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's.

The factor of this problem which, during the past century, has been pushing to the front, the factor which includes and covers a multitude of smaller factors, is the *principle of contact*. I use the word "principle" advisedly, because, in the whole course of the world's history, no principle has more persistently and irresistibly asserted itself. No nation has been allowed to live an entirely isolated life, or to develop its own institutions without reference to the great body of nations. There is, at first view, a superficial denial of this principle in the structure of physical nature, in the material separations of mountain and forest and ocean, and in the fact of distance. A second denial has asserted itself in the radical differences of national temperament, habit, and language; a third in certain national conceits deeply rooted in religion or culture. The Hebrew fenced himself off from the rest of mankind with his religion, the central idea of which was, that he was selected by God to be separate and alone; that his God was a Jewish God, and that everything that was not Jewish was contemptible. The Greek styled every one a Barbarian who was not a Greek. The Basque, claiming that he spoke the language which Noah received from Adam, withdrew to his little nook in the western Pyrenees, withstood the successive irruptions of Phœnician,

Greek, Egyptian, and Carthaginian, and defied the power of the Roman Augustus. Yet the Hebrew race became distributed through the Gentile communities, and the Hebrew yielded to the seductive influence of Greek custom and toned his literature and his religion into partial accommodation with Gentile society. Despised and ridiculed by Roman poets and satirists, the Roman Empire could not do without him, and conceded to him privileges which it refused to native Roman citizens. Greece could not evade contact with Rome, and Rome gave herself up to the influence of Greek art and literature. Sicily became the meeting-place of the nations, the battle-field of rival races and of rival creeds, a point of power for Phœnicians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Normans, and Lombards. The Basque threw himself into the Carlist insurrection and was swept, after all his years of proud isolation, into the Spanish monarchy, compelled to endure the presence of Spanish garrisons in his towns, and to substitute the Spanish language for his own in his schools. These are only a few of the illustrations of history's emphatic assertion that it is not good for nations any more than for men to be alone. History is a series of shocks, signalling the rupture of natural and artificial barriers between men and races. The idea of the race being more than the individual, of the individual reaching his real consummation in the race, expands naturally and nec-

essarily into the idea of the individual state or race realising its true and highest destiny in the community of races and states. That idea underlies alike the philosophy of history and Christianity which is, before all else, a social system. The educative power of contact and social attrition is no mere matter of theory. It is illustrated and enforced, alike in the history of nations and of individuals; of literary culture and of religion. It is assumed in the very existence of the science of international law.

We may not always approve or like the processes by which barriers are torn away, and peoples hurled rather than drawn together. Blood flows in rivers, and force and fraud assert themselves: none the less the process goes on and emphasises the eternal decree—it is not good for nations to be alone. England throws herself into India, Australia, and Africa; America is pushed, in the inevitable process of her own expansion, nearer to the frontiers of Mongol civilisation, and plants herself in the Pacific Islands and in the West Indies. The recent sickening horrors in China are on the same line. Whatever Salisbury's diplomacy may mean, whatever the understanding between the Kaiser and the Czar, be sure that the jealous, self-centred, isolated China of the past centuries is no more forever. The nations will have a highway through her plains and cities; the throb of the nineteenth century pulse

will jar the stagnation of her most interior provinces, and the hideous brutality of her barbarism will be stamped out under the heel of a humanity which is both consciously and unconsciously Christian.

Can we escape being drawn into the deep and strong current of this movement? Can Mont Blanc escape the touch of the rising sun? Not so. It enters into our constructive problem. We have been in the current, possibly, longer than some of us have suspected. Our experience in Hawaii and Cuba and the Philippines is by no means our initial experience. To escape complication by means of a Monroe doctrine, has not been to escape contact. How we may adjust the possible fact of complication depends on our adjustment of the actual fact of contact. This fact we have been confronting for a good part of the past century in the immense immigration into the United States. Whatever we may have already accomplished in the moulding process, has not been upon a mass wholly American. As early as 1860, our foreign population was over four millions; the arrivals from 1860 to 1890 were more than ten millions; and from 1890 to 1900, over three and a half millions. In the last fiscal year, four hundred and fifty thousand have arrived at the port of New York. You know the size of the German element in the great cities, New York, Chicago, St. Louis, and others. In this city alone there are upwards

of forty thousand Bohemians. French-Canadians pour by thousands into New England and are absorbed into its manufacturing towns. In the railway station of a large town on the Providence and Worcester Railroad, I observed, several years ago, that the public notices were posted in both French and English. The Italian has largely supplanted the Irishman in the working gangs on our sewers and aqueducts. I am sure that some of you remember how, some time in the forties, a Chinese junk found its way to New York, and lay at the Battery, and how it was the town talk, and thousands flocked to the pier to get their first sight of a live Chinaman. It is a common enough sight now. We have, like other cities, a Chinese quarter, and it is not a savoury quarter, physically or morally. It is true that the Mongol, like the most of the Latin races, does not assimilate with American institutions ; but others, and those the more vigorous races, do assimilate. They come to stay. They become citizens. They take a hand in politics, and are elected to office. They have their own journals in their own languages, and they control large and very important material interests.

It is one thing to invite immigration. It is quite another and a much more serious thing to dispose of the results of immigration. We have, I suppose, gotten past being hoodwinked by the old oratorical commonplace about America being "the

refuge for the oppressed of every clime," without ceasing to recognise whatever modicum of truth may still be contained in this. While it is true that we are proud to number among our most intelligent and valuable citizens many of foreign birth, it is also true that Europe has used us freely as a dumping-ground for the very offscourings of its populations, and has made over to us a horde of wretches, who, so far from being oppressed, have been an oppression to their own governments, of which they were only too glad to rid their jails and workhouses. It is true enough that we afford protection to the emigrant, and give him opportunities of self-development and better wages than he could get at home; also true that he is employed in political machinery as his spade and pick are employed on the railroads and aqueducts; true that we quickly furbish him into a government official, to administer our affairs for us and save us the trouble. The republican ideal is to make him a citizen in reasonable time and by wholesome and respectable methods. The reality is, too frequently, to make him a political tool in the hands of partisan demagogues.

There is another, and, fortunately, a smaller class of immigrants who are not ignorant; who see, or think they see, in our institutions an opportunity of realising their own idea of liberty, by which they mean unbridled license. For one, I frankly suspect the wisdom of the easy tolerance

of the American people, and its sublime and re-
poseful confidence that its greatness and strength
are sufficient to let this class have full liberty of
speech and of organisation, even as an amiable ele-
phant might tolerate a flea upon his back. It may
be easy to dispose of a troublesome anarchist or of a
troublesome organisation whenever they may have
become obtrusive or dangerous; but ideas are not
so easily disposed of. They are more elusive,
and they spread and multiply themselves; and
these people are propagandists, disseminators of
ideas which strike not only at democracy, but at
all government. We have already seen the
power which such men wield, in the actual organi-
sation of anarchistic elements for the destruction of
life and property; and it is a significant fact that it
has proved possible to place an avowed anarchist
in the gubernatorial chair of a State.

This is not merely a question of numbers. It is
a test question, whether the democratic idea in
itself is centripetal, drawing to itself and identify-
ing with itself a mass of men trained under other
social and political conditions; or whether it is
centrifugal, throwing them off from the democratic
ideal into something else—possibly anarchism.

For it does not follow that contact means as-
similation and settled relation. Its first result is
often antagonism, and sometimes the antagonism
grows with the continuance of the contact. The
history of the past century has shown us that.

An alien race was brought by compulsion within the sphere of American institutions, and became a prime factor in American politics. The working out of the issue thus created cost the country the lives of a million of producers, besides leaving a large section of the United States with a gigantic practical problem on its hands which still awaits a decisive solution. The country has found itself charged with the destinies of a race reared under loose and low moral ideals, enforced ignorance and servitude, degradation of manhood and womanhood, and that race must be adjusted somehow to an economy of freedom and political independence. It is the unvarying testimony of history that the price of slavery is paid to the last farthing, and with compound interest, by the master class. The price is not discounted by emancipation. Emancipation may change the political status of the slave; but it does not change the slave, at least for some generations. The emancipated slave carries into his free condition the antecedents, the habits, the spirit, the moral quality of the slave. The hatchet is buried, I know. Our children know nothing of the civil war save as they hear our stories or read the history in their books; but the problem remains, and goes with us into the new century; the problem whether that alien race can be fairly and fully incorporated into the working machinery of democratic institutions. "The gift of suffrage," perhaps some one will say. But suppose we grant

that suffrage was wisely given when it was given, surely it has not solved the difficulty. Freedmen's bureaus, churches, schools — yes, they all have helped to abate the first rawness of the issue; none the less, the race question is a living and burning question to-day over the area once occupied by the slave system, and hints have not been wanting of its existence in a more northern section: an element of political discord, an opportunity for political trickery, a pretence for political injustice, a menace to the true democratic ideal, a living and acting survival, under the democratic name, of a political ideal which was essentially anti-democratic.

And now we are confronted with a new set of questions and a new array of difficulties, through the events of the last three years, by which we have come into possession of new territory in the Caribbean Sea, in the Sandwich Islands, and in the Western Pacific, which last covers an area four times as large as that of Great Britain, and twice as large as that of Spain. Some portions of it have never been surveyed. It is peopled by Spaniards, Chinese, Malays, Negroes, Hindoos, and a variety of native tribes, the whole amounting to upwards of eight millions, speaking thirty languages or dialects, and in religion representing Christianity, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, and native Paganism. This territory is ours, to organise, to govern, to civilise. It presents conditions such

as we have never before had to deal with, compelling a new and original constructive policy which will tax to the very utmost the resources of consummate statesmanship.

I am not here to discuss the wisdom or the error of the policy which has thrust this task upon us. Personally, I never believed in the measures which threw us into the recent war with Spain ; but that is nothing to the purpose. The war is ended ; the dead are buried ; the pæans have been sung ; the triumphal arches have been erected and are disappearing ; the processions have defiled, and we have Porto Rico and the Philippines added to our territory, and Cuba under our supervision. There is nothing for us but to accept the situation and to deal with it as wisely and efficiently as we may. I dismiss the word " imperialism " and all that it implies as beneath notice. It is nothing but a party shibboleth which falsely interprets the intent of that policy which, justly or unjustly, it condemns. Expansion is a fact, whether we will or no. We are forced into the movement of the great civilisations. Isolation is no longer possible. As the wealthiest nation in the world, as the greatest consumer and producer in the world, we cannot be economically isolated. We cannot be geographically isolated while lines of communication by land and water are bringing us into contact with the very ends of the earth. If it be true that the centre of the world's commerce, wealth, and power is being shifted from

the Atlantic to the Pacific as once it was transferred from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, the opening of the Isthmus canal alone will throw us into the competition for the commercial supremacy of the Pacific; and we cannot be politically isolated so long as political and commercial interests are so closely intertwined as they are. And if, in the Pacific and its adjacent territories, the question is to be settled whether that sea is to be commanded by the Slav or the Anglo-Saxon, we must have a voice in the settlement. We cannot be there as a commercial power merely, and not as a political and social factor.

For one I am glad that we have been swept into a position which compels us to play a definite part in the commonwealth of nations. If we have attained to national manhood, our proper place is at the world's polling-booth and at the world's council-table. We have been called upon for arbitration, but it is for us to take a hand also in administration. It is better for us. It is an indispensable part of our training in fields where European diplomacy has grown grey, and in which we are as yet, comparatively, novices. If we are a great nation, we are to remember that greatness is not an end unto itself, and that the true and highest destiny of greatness is service. If God made us a great nation, it was not in order that we might comfortably grow big and rich. There belongs to us, not only as a right, but as a duty, a distinct and large

share in shaping the civilisation, the commerce, the intercourse of the world, so as to promote the best economy of life, the greatest security, and the most firmly established peace and concord throughout the world. We belong to the brotherhood of nations, and we are our brothers' keeper as they are ours. We have much to say about the protection of life and property and the laws of social morality ; we have much to do on the line of education in self-government ; we have our part in seeing to it that the arts and refinements of civilisation shall have " ample room and verge enough " for large growth, while their development is regulated by the broad principles of humanitarianism and Christian charity. It is for us to assist in fostering the institutions of religion ; to further the development of natural forces and resources ; to aid in educating rude populations in personal decency and sanitary economy. Here is a new and practically boundless field, not only for statesmanship, but for philanthropy, for science, for religion, for literary culture. Troublesome ! Yes, I know it is ; but man is born unto trouble ; the chief end of man is not to be comfortable ; and manhood, individual or national, is fostered in the atmosphere of trouble. It is in difficult situations that great forces are needed, and a great nation has its greatness recognised by being set to cope with exceptional difficulties. If our governmental system does not provide for such problems, it is for us not to give up or shirk the prob-

lems, but to enlarge or adjust the system. What signifies the conservation of a system in its original, snug integrity, compared with meeting the larger demands of the present? God's economy, the range and sweep of God's plans, are greater than our little systems :

“ *They* have their day, and cease to be.
They are but broken lights of Thee :
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.”

It is a good thing that we have been lifted to a point where we must look at more than the United States, large as that is. Our fathers framed our polity to meet the conditions of their own day, and of a future as large as they could divine, and not to keep us shackled under conditions which they could by no possibility foresee. Their foresight was wonderful, as is shown by the fact that the country, with its vastly extended area, with its flood of immigration and its corresponding increase of a new class of voters, with its phenomenal growth of large cities and its multiplication of office-holders—has nevertheless held together under the old Constitution. Are we prepared to admit the inflexible rigidity of our polity, and the absence of all power of expansion or adaptation? We have had no experience in colonial policy? Then it is time that we set ourselves to acquire it. If we do not know, let us go to school. One of the best things that can happen to the American nation is

to become convinced that it does not know everything. It was said of a distinguished English professor that his *foible* was omniscience. Moreover, we are not having our first experience with untried problems. In one way or another we have been dealing with them from the first years of our national life, and some of them at least we have solved successfully. At any rate, the experience has been good for us, and more is sometimes learned through failure than through success. We were a colony ourselves once, and learned by experience the colonial policy of the mother nation, and were obliged to give her a lesson in return. A people that has no hard questions on its hands is in danger of stagnation. If it be true that that nation is happy which has no history, the truth places that happy nation in the category of invertebrates. Of course we shall make mistakes, and a good many of them; but the triumph of life for a nation, as for a man, is not to make no mistakes, but to learn from mistakes, to mount on mistakes to success, and, as Frederick Robertson so finely said, "to organise victory out of mistakes."

My time grows short. Yet a succession of questions presses forward out of the untried future, like lines of breakers rolling in from a near horizon. You will readily have anticipated certain topics which even such a desultory discussion as this could not well evade, but at which it is possible only to hint. Prominent among these is the

problem raised by the rapid and enormous increase of wealth, and the concentration of vast amounts of capital in the hands of individuals and corporations; the relations of labour to capital, and of great financial combinations to small industries. The near future will be forced to face these questions more squarely than they have yet been faced. Up to this time they have been met with temporary accommodations and compromises which have simply staved off the radical issue, and have eluded the grapple with first principles. The present conditions hold possible grave elements of menace. Is the new century going to evolve a sharp and irritating class-distinction between rich and poor? Is capital alone to have a voice in determining the emoluments of labour? Is labour to be organised on the basis of an indiscriminating hatred of capital as such? Is capital to be pitted against brains and culture, and is

“The gold that gilds the straitened forehead of the fool”

to bring the wise man abjectly to the fool's feet? Is capital to control political issues? Is it going to be possible (or to *continue* possible) for capital to buy up legislation in favour of any scheme which it may be interested in putting under the protection of law? Is that really true which was said, not long ago, by a politician and capitalist to a learned and accomplished clergyman: “You have got to understand that *we* are masters of the situation.

We pay for the support of your churches and institutions, and you have got to do as we say." You may say, and truthfully, "that was only the brutal vapouring of an unscrupulous bully:" none the less it proves, if proof were needed, that the unscrupulous bully is a fact; that that idea has acquired in his mind the force of a principle; that he is not afraid to formulate and give voice to his principle, and that he represents a body of sentiment larger or smaller, more or less threatening.

It would also lie in my track to speak of the questions raised by the diffusion of education. In this lie some of our richest sources of hope, as there also lie possibilities of danger. From the beginning of our national life, popular education has been recognised as an integral part of the democratic idea. In this city the discussion of the common-school system was contemporaneous with the founding of this society, and in 1805 DeWitt Clinton brought the subject before the Legislature of the State of New York. You do not need to be told of the power and fruitfulness of the public-school system; but your own eyes have also witnessed the attempt to convert it into a political engine, and to prostitute it to the purposes of political demagogues.

The history of our higher education, as represented by the colleges and universities, presents other, different, and not less interesting features. It is perhaps premature to speak of our *system* of

higher education. The higher education, as yet, is represented by individual institutions which are not ranged on a common line or gauged by a common standard. None the less, these institutions have wrought their own result, which, in the aggregate, is neither small nor contemptible, and which appears in what may fairly be called a literary class. Our history has not evolved any great literary movement, any great creative literary epoch like the age of Pericles or the Elizabethan period. Literary habit and achievement have oared their way slowly and laboriously up the stream, against the powerful current of material development and preoccupation with business. Literary pursuit has been largely on the line of collecting and absorbing literary material, and we have collected and absorbed much. We have made ourselves familiar with the literary treasures of the world. The best and latest products of the European press are swept promptly into our libraries and are read in their own languages. We have also produced something—more than could have been expected within the brief space of a century and with the predominant direction of our energies to material pursuits. We have produced no great poets, dramatists, or novelists, yet the average of our best has been very high. On the lines of history, theology, natural science, and jurisprudence, we have won a high and recognised place. I was asked some years ago by an English

clergyman if the Americans read the classics. He evidently did not know that the standard Latin and English lexicon in use in the English universities was the work of two American scholars.

Such facts might easily be multiplied; but the relation of a literary class to the constructive work of the future cannot be overlooked. If the literary class shall assert itself as a caste, if it shall shut itself up in libraries and refuse contact with the people's life and movement which surge round the library walls—it may well be suspected. A self-centred literary aristocracy is little better than a moneyed or a political aristocracy, and the natural tendencies of high culture are as aristocratic as those of old families. On the other hand, there is power in literary taste and literary avocation, which often go hand in hand with the pursuit of business, to purge gain-getting of its sordidness, to leaven social intercourse and make it more distinctively an intercourse of minds and less of rival silks and diamonds. There is a distinct and grand and salutary possibility of power, if our men of ripe culture and extensive knowledge shall throw themselves into popular movements, infuse a better element into our politics, and impart to our statesmanship a finer grain and a richer quality than, in many instances, now pertain to it. The real native ability, and the breeziness and raciness which mark so much of what passes under the name of statesmanship might, in some cases, be

profitably toned down with a little more knowledge and a little more culture. The mere ability to harangue does not constitute a statesman. Delicate questions of arbitration and international comity such as are fast coming to the front are not to be adjusted by stump orators, and fortunately it has been proved that we can furnish better material. High culture owes a debt to the people, and it is to be counted one of the most hopeful signs of the present that so many of the presidents and professors of our higher literary institutions are giving their energies to the adjustment of international questions, and that, in so many of these institutions, the attention of students is being directed to the study of political and social science.

There are two things in which one may detect omens of good for the new century, in spite of the rough seas into the teeth of which we are sailing. The one of these, which it is not easy to analyse or define, is that strange reserve of energy which lies in the American people. They are wonderfully tolerant, wonderfully long-suffering; they will let gross abuses thrive and flaunt themselves before their very eyes, and will pay the cost, and only grumble a little. They will allow bad and designing men to have their swing, and ventilate their falsehoods, and assert their ruffianism without any vigorous or effective protest. This city of ours, not to go any farther, has sat quietly under two several régimes of fraud

and ruffianism ; and its citizens daily submit to certain results of corporate greed and indifference to the public comfort which no great city of Europe would endure for a month without popular outcry or revolution. But this tolerance has a limit. There is a point where the American people as a body wakes up to the fact of abuse and determines to put an end to it. And when the sting has thus at last gone down to the quick of the public sense, the uprising is portentous, the forward movement resistless, and the catastrophe overwhelming. Your memories will supply more than one illustration ; and from hopeful signs, I am encouraged to believe that another and *striking* illustration will soon be added to the gallery.

There is often apparent an indifference to probable contingencies ; a disposition to despise prophylactic measures ; a sort of unreasoning assurance that an emergency will create the resources to meet it ; and no doubt this blind confidence and heedlessness have sometimes entailed temporary loss and disaster. But one will do well to think twice before he sets it down solely to ignorant conceit, and refuses to allow any value or truthfulness to a deep-lying national instinct of real power to meet a crisis, which does not prove false when the crisis is on. If it were conceit, some of us have seen more than once that there was a real something behind the conceit. And so, in the new complications into which the new century shall introduce

us, shall we not be warranted in a degree of faith that this reserve of energy and resource will come to the front as it shall be needed, and that the American people will prove its capacity to meet new conditions with new resources?

And, finally, there lies for the new century a source of hope in the region of religion and sound morals. It is to the lasting honour of our forefathers that they distinctly recognised and acknowledged the hand of God in the evolution of their national life, and the dependence of their national prosperity upon his blessing. Puritanism may have made our New England fathers stern men, but it made them upright men. Even patriotism would have been second to religion, had it been possible to dissociate the two. It made men of iron, but it was tempered iron, which could hew for itself a way to empire.

“They were men of present valour, stalwart old iconoclasts, Unconvinced by axe or gibbet that all virtue was the past’s;”

and though at the domestic and social altars Religion stood in the guise of a calm Vestal, cold as the snows of Katahdin, never were those altars more sacredly guarded, or their fires fed with sweeter incense.

I will not take upon myself to say that the religious sentiment has weakened, although it expresses itself to-day in new forms. Statistics,

which, in any moral question, are the unsafest of all guides, may nevertheless be trusted in their attestation of at least the formal adherence of a vast section of the nation to the institutions of religion. It will be an evil day for us on which the religious sentiment shall become weaker, and it will mean disaster if it do not grow stronger. An ungodly nation, a dissolute nation, a nation which does not keep faith, a selfish, grasping, and avaricious nation, however long it may thrive, and however brilliant its career of conquest, as surely as the sun goes to his setting will go over the precipice down which plunged the empires of the East and of Rome. The demand that religion should let politics alone is an impudent demand. Religion and its true teachers have a legitimate and active relation to anything in any region which involves a moral issue ; and that moral issues are involved in politics needs no argument.

We are passing through a transition period as regards religious ideas and religious formulas. That, in itself, is not a bad thing. It is the road to clearer light and better definition. The great principles of religion are eternal, however the forms may change. And it is well that every American citizen who fears God and holds by the moral standards of Christianity should have his eyes open to one black chasm which yawns at our feet, in the growing menace to the sanctity of the marriage relation, and to the consequent integrity

and social influence of the family life. It is a commonplace, but a commonplace which needs to be repeated and accentuated in these days, that the purity of the family life is the very foundation-stone of national prosperity. That this is menaced, and menaced seriously by certain conditions of American civilisation is no anchorite's morbid fancy, and no secret to any man who can read the signs of the times. The looseness of the marriage bond, the lack of adequate legal safeguards against the rash or illegal act of marriage, the practically unlimited facilities for divorce, and the increasing frequency of divorce, are things adapted to create the gravest concern in the mind of every good man and woman. The alarming fact is that these things are conventionally tolerated, winked at, toned down and gilded, in not a few cases, by wealth and social position : that they do not call out the sturdy protest and the social ostracism which their essential badness and their dangerousness demand.

God is in history. God is the God of nations. God honours and employs for high ends the nation which honours Him; and there is hope for the new century only if the great principles of divine law underlie our legislation; only if the principles of sound morals pervade politics; only if the great body of citizens recognise their first and highest obligation to those divine ordinances which were from the beginning, and which must

abide, inflexible and unchanging, so long as kings reign and princes decree judgment.

The old century is well-nigh all behind us. We are to be congratulated who have lived in this century, and have witnessed the growth of nations, the triumph of mind over matter, the evolution of great ideas, the discovery of nature's secrets, the triumphs of inventive skill, the advances in social and domestic comfort, the progress of learning, the contact of nations, the growing hatred of war, the inroads into barbarism, the dissemination of religious truth, the victory of freedom. It is much to have been touched by forces like these; still more if we have responded sympathetically to the touch; still more, if, in the smallest degree, we have been able to contribute to the general advance. We may be permitted to go some short distance into the new century. It will not be far at the farthest, and the vast and imposing possibilities of that new era will unfold under the hands of other generations. But we can send forward to these our best hopes; cheerfully make over to them our best achievements, in the assurance that they will better them and rise on them to higher things; give them our best wishes and attach to them our best expectations for the welfare of the land which is ours and which we love; and hope with all our hearts that they may enjoy more, and know more, and achieve more than has fallen to our lot. The life of a man, of a generation, of a cen-

tury, can be only fractional ; and that is a thoroughly and distinctly Christian principle which schools us to contentment in being mere parts and stages in a vast development which we cannot compass, and in doing and giving our best to prepare for the men who are to come after us the blessings of which we cannot share the full fruition. As Christian men, as loyal Americans, our outlook must be forward.

“ Freedom doth not consist

In musing with our faces toward the past,
While petty cares and crawling interests twist
Their spider threads around us, which, at last,
Grow strong as iron chains to cramp and bind
In formal narrowness heart, soul, and mind.

* * * * *

And, as the finder of some unknown realm,
Mounting a summit whence he thinks to see
On either side of him the imprisoning sea,
Beholds, above the clouds that overwhelm
The valley-land, peak after snowy peak
Stretch out of sight, each like a silver helm
Beneath its plume of smoke, sublime and bleak,
And what he thought an island, finds to be
A continent—to him first oped—so we
Can, from our height of Freedom, look along
A boundless future, ours if we be strong ;
Or, if we shrink, better remount our ships,
And, fleeing God's express design, trace back
The hero-freighted Mayflower's prophet-track.”





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